Facilities at petrol pumps

1268. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has received any Memorandum from the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry suggesting setting up of an autonomous regulatory agency for petroleum market and making mandatory provision for opening general stores/shops, at all petrol pumps in rural areas as may provide postal/telephone/internet facilities and vehicle repair workshops as well;

(b) if so, the response of his Ministry thereto;

(c) the time likely to be taken in providing these facilities at all the petrol pumps in rural areas all over the country; and

(d) the details of the plan, if any, in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Government have received a Memorandum from the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry suggesting *inter-alia*, the setting up of an independent Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board and making it mandatory for the petrol refilling stations in rural areas to provide facilities like post office, telephone, internet, tractor and truck repair, utility shopping including a medical store.

(b) to (d) Government propose to set up a Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas to all parts of the country including remote areas, at fair prices and to establish sectoral regulations to ensure competition, protect the consumer and encourage investment as well as to take action against violation of Rules and Regulations of the Board.

Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are free to decide about providing various additional facilities at Retail Outlets in rural areas as per their commercial considerations.

Price parity on crude

1269. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the West Asian crude producers impose an additional premium on supplies to Asian countries including India;

(b) whether the Asian consumers of West Asian crude are paying an extra of Dollar 2.00 per barrel over the last ten years and whether India has paid more than half a billion dollars on this account; and

(c) whether India will organize Asian oil importers to jointly prevail on OPEC for price parity on crude supplied to Asian nations with that of Europe and US?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The National Oil Companies (NOCs) of some countries in West Asia have different pricing formula for their sale of crude oil to different regions in the world such as North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. As per market practice the pricing formula is linked to the marker/bench mark crude oil relevant for each region, *viz.*, West Texas Intermediate Crude Oil for North America, Brent Crude Oil for Europe and Oman and Dubai Crude Oils for Asian customers. Based on the pricing formula, the price paid by Asian customers is sometimes higher and sometimes lower than that of US and European customers.

The Government is not involved in contract negotiations with West Asian Government for the import of crude oil. However, owing to high oil prices and their ramifications for developing economies, attempts have been made to redress the issue of high prices by raising these issues in relevant international forums as well as during bilateral meetings with West Asian exporting countries.

The principal Asian suppliers and purchasers of oil have been invited to a meeting being convened in New Delhi on the 6th January, 2005 jointly by India, Kuwait and the International Energy Forum.

Losses due to non-revision of oil prices

1270. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Ministerof PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Oil Companies would have suffered losses upto Rs. 20,000 crores in case prices of petroleum products were not revised;